



South Dakota Department of the Military
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



T.F. RIGGS STUDENTS HONOR SD VIETNAM VETERANS

This November marked the 30th anniversary of The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. The Department of Defense launched its 50th commemoration of the Vietnam War at The Wall on Memorial Day.

As part of this commemoration, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Committee asked states to have the names of their heroes, that appear on the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, read and recorded. Once completed, each state's video is uploaded to the Wall's website for all to view.

South Dakota's 193 names were read by T. F. Riggs High School students: Tessa Myren, Grace Gunderson, Lydia Kanz, Sarah Kanz, Joni Willoughby, Justin Oakland, Grant Erwin, Louis Mehlhaff, Douglas Bachand, and Adam Bollinger. Jay Mickelson, foreign language instructor at T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre, selected the students for this project.

Steve Harding, Deputy Secretary for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, said, "Involving the T.F. Riggs students in this historical project was an easy choice. T, F. Riggs has a strong history of supporting our veterans."

This video can be viewed at:

<http://vvmf.wordpress.com/2012/11/26/students-honor-fallen-from-their-state/>

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ELKS TURN ELVES



Pierre Elks Lodge No. 1953 is once again sponsoring the stocking stuffer Christmas program for veterans. Items received will be presented to patients at the VA Black Hills Health Care System and veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veteran's Home in Hot Springs on December 20.

Collection boxes have been delivered to American State Bank, BankWest, Home Federal Savings Bank, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, First National Bank, Dakota State Bank, Dakota Prairie Bank, Oahe Federal Credit Union, Dakota Plains Federal Credit Union, VFW Post No. 2038, American Legion Post 8, Pierre Senior Citizens Center, Morris, Inc., Linn Medical Clinic, New Life Assembly of God Church, the National Guard Armory, the Hughes County Courthouse, and the Elk's Office.

The Elks/Elves are hoping to collect such items as white underwear and socks, sweat clothes, disposable razors, shaving cream, deodorant, gloves, toothbrushes, small tubes of toothpaste, pocket combs, books, music CD's, DVD movies, coffee, playing cards, puzzles, games, and prepaid phone cards. Wrapped gifts to men or to women are also welcome.

The Elves will gather on Tuesday, December 18, to collect all the donated items and will spend the next two days sorting and packing the sleigh for their trip out west.

Pierre Elks Lodge Exalted Ruler, Jeff Hallem, urges everyone to remember the veterans in their communities during this holiday season, particularly those who are hospitalized or those who are in nursing homes. As Taylor Caldwell once said, "This is the message of Christmas — We are never alone." A personal visit, a card, or a letter can mean a great deal to them.

This project has been a success story for Pierre Elks Lodge 1953. That success is due in part to the Elks for the leadership, to the businesses that host collection boxes and to the communities that support our South Dakota veterans.



It came without ribbons! It came without tags! It came without packages, boxes or bags!"... *Then* the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! "Maybe Christmas," he thought, "*doesn't* come from a store. Maybe Christmas... perhaps... means a little bit more!" ~Dr. Seuss, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*

SD GUARD CONTRACTING TEAM ACTIVATES FOR DEPLOYMENT

Family, friends and co-workers joined together at Camp Rapid for an activation ceremony for four Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1978th Contingency Contracting team, Wednesday, Nov. 28.

Maj. Matthew Symonds, Capt. Paula Moore, Sgt. 1st Class Jack Hahne and Staff Sgt. Amanda Galdo will deploy for a nine-month tour to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Rapid City-based 1978th will plan for and coordinate all contracting functions at a brigade or combat team level.

"We work with contracts that deal with anything from purchasing food to construction projects," said Maj. Matthew Symonds, 1978th commander. "We are here to make sure the military is a good steward of our tax-payers money."

The unit will be responsible for assisting with the development and administration of contracting support plans, policy and appendices in support of operational, contingency and deliberate plans associated within an area of responsibility.

Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG, addressed the audience during the activation ceremony. "Even though this is a small unit, they are a big deal," said Reisch. "We have four members who will be split up into four different areas overseas. Their function is critical in the operations overseas. Without them everything would come to a halt."

"The South Dakota National Guard has a rich history of deploying service members in time of need. "The South Dakota National Guard has been sending people out the door to do missions the state and nation has needed for more than 150 years," said Reisch. "We have developed a tremendous legacy over that century and a half. There is no question in my mind that this unit will continue to enhance the legacy of the SDNG."

The unit will report to Camp Shelby, Miss., to complete several weeks of theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas. This is the first mobilization for the 1978th.



Upcoming Events

Dec. 1—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City VFW Post—10:00 am

Dec. 7—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown American Legion —1:00 pm

Dec. 8—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls DAV Hdqtrs—1:00 pm

Dec. 15—Wreaths Across America

THE RIGHT PLACE

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has developed a new public service announcement (PSA) to let women veterans know they've come to "The Right Place" when seeking VA health care. The number of women using VA health care has doubled in the past decade and that number is expected to double again soon. The 30-second video PSA, produced by VA's Women's Health Services office, addresses key themes defined by Secretary Shinseki.

Key messages in the PSA include: assuring women veterans that the VA is ready to serve them; encouraging viewers to rethink assumptions that all Veterans are male; and reminding Americans that women veterans are coming home, separating from service, or returning to Guard or Reserve status.

The PSA was developed for nationwide release along with a new employee awareness video created as part of the VA's ongoing efforts to change its culture to be more understanding and accommodating of women veterans. It also promotes the recognition of women veterans around Veterans Day, honoring their service to our country.

To access additional campaign materials, visit www.womenshealth.va.gov/culture_change.asp.

To access the toolkit, visit www.womenshealth.va.gov/toolkits.asp.

The PSA is available for viewing on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5FGIZ2uYiU> and www.womenshealth.va.gov.

she was
there.

It's **our job** to give **her**
the best care anywhere.



WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE



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